



John Anthony Bongiovi

November 13, 1927 - December 27, 2022

John Anthony Bongiovi entered eternal rest on December 27, 2022, at the age of 95. He was born on November 13, 1927 to Charles S. and Susan (Hovance) Bongiovi.

He is preceded in death by his parents; beloved wife Genevieve; siblings, Joe Bongiovi, Charles Bongiovi II, and Marie Bongiovi Hill; nephew, Charles Bongiovi III; niece, Margaret Bass. John is survived by his daughter, Lucille Clothier (Michael); nieces and nephews, Michael, Sue, Stephen, Lisa, Tammy, Debbie, Barbara, and Cindy; grandchildren, Jon-Michael, Mark Anthony, and Wesley Thomas; great-granddaughter, Genevieve; many other loving family members and friends.

John was born November 13th, 1927 in San Antonio, Texas to Mother, Susan Hovance Bongiovi (Slavik) and Father, Charles Stephen Bongiovi (Italian).

The Bongiovi family lived in the Harlandale district on West Theo Ave. John graduated in 1945 from Burbank High School. He was in Future Farmers of America and showed calves in San Antonio and Houston. He cultivated a 90-acre garden at Burbank High School where they let him grow produce (including mustard greens). He would pick the produce one day, get up at 3 am and use the old Burbank truck to take the crop to the Farmers' market. He had his own little business. When the FFA group went to the Houston Livestock & Rodeo, he and his buddy, Tommy Kovall, entered the calf

scramble (unbeknownst to their FFA teacher). They both managed to wrangle a calf and the teacher wondered how he was supposed to get the calves back to San Antonio on a school bus?

Even though his high school teacher said he could get a scholarship to veterinary school, John enlisted in the Navy on 11-13-1945. He was a Seaman First Radarman on the USS Bottineau and witnessed nuclear testing near Bikini Island. He was awarded the Victory Medal WWII. He said he enjoyed the travel. After he mustered out (October 5, 1947), he went to work in the shipping department of the Colonial Cake company where he met his beautiful wife of 59 years, Genevieve. They were married on April 11, 1948. His Dad suggested he apply to Kelly Air Force Base where he had a 39-year career in Directorate of Special Weapons. He would travel any place the Air Force had involvement with special weapons. With his Navy service, he had 40 years civil service.

Just a few years back someone from that department called and was having problems with some of the testing equipment. He was able to solve their problem and when they asked what they could pay him, he said no payment. He said was glad to awaken some of his brain cells.

John and Genevieve were able to adopt a baby daughter, Lucille Marie (Lucy) in 1955. He told his caregivers in recent years, "That was the best thing that happened to him".

John started hunting in North Bexar County when he was 16 years old. He shot a spike and from then on there were many years of limiting out. He also made a special effort (just a few years ago) to shoot turkey for Thanksgiving after his daughter said that a wild turkey would be a nice addition to the meal. He said he made a mistake (actually very fortunate) of going to see Grandpa Zaiontz when they were making venison sausage in 1948 and he said he could do that! From then on sausage making was an annual thing until February 8, 2020. A 72 year career.

Since he traveled extensively in his work, John was a member of the over-100,000 mile club with Kelly Air Force. He was able to take his wife,

Genevieve with him once on a trip to Florence and Rome, Italy. It was the experience of her life to see “her Polish Pope”, Saint Pope John Paul II. John always wanted Lucy to make the trip to Rome, which she was able to do with her family in November of this year.

John started a coffee station for his coworkers and since more money was placed in it than needed to buy the coffee, he organized and bar-b-queed steak or brisket for family dinner nights for the entire “weapons” department at Comanche Corral room.

John was a high energy person so after he retired from Kelly Air Force Base, he went to work part-time for the next ten years with Tech Reps, a government contractor he had worked with.

Even while working full time and traveling extensively, John still managed to raise cattle. His Father, Charles had been a cattle trader at San Antonio Union Stock yards. John’s first cow was kept at Grandpa Zaiontz’s little field. Then, John found a partner and they “ran” cattle on some leased property right outside town where Loop 410 eventually cut through. He also owned cattle that he kept at Joe’s land near Cuero.

John love gardening and had almost one-fourth of his back yard in a fenced off garden. He raised mostly tomatoes, but also bell peppers, jalapenos, chili patens, cabbage, broccoli, melons and carrots. He would till the garden in spring and fall with a tiller until the fall of 2020. He said he could do it “no problem” when either his grandson, Wesley or son-in-law, Mike tried to do it for him in recent years.

He would head to one of his favorite places, Fanick’s Garden Center where he would even pick up extra plants for other family members and deliver to their garden. He tilled and managed the garden for his sister Marie. The two of them had plans for another garden before her passing in 2021.

John learned how to graft various fruit trees but his favorite was the Pecan. He grafted approximately 300 trees on the Colorado River bank for a customer. His wife was his assistant. He also dug up trees on his brother

Joe's homestead near Cuero, Tx. Then, John would re-plant the native tree and graft wood from a different tree that produced a better pecan. He also grafted many trees on Joe and Elsa's land.

He made his homemade spaghetti sauce using the tomatoes from his garden. He arranged for one of his calves or bought one from an associate and had it fattened and butchered, so his family would have fresh beef in their freezer for the next 6 months or so.

He gathered figs from trees at neighbors' and family's yards and made fig preserves. His famous fig preserves were even used as favors at his grandson Wesley and Jenn's wedding (over 130 jars).

John continued her tradition of making date-nut loaf bread after his wife, Genevieve passed away in 2007. He always kept her beloved rose bushes watered and fertilized. He would hang two hummingbird feeders when she asked him.

He also continued Genevieve's tradition of canning Polish Dill Pickles. The "produce man" at the San Antonio Farmer's market would call John to let him know when he got bushels of fresh, small cucumbers. John would have already had the jars sterilized and the vinegar standing by. He would have already grown the garlic and dill in his garden.

John made as much as he could of deer sausage, dill pickles and fig preserves so he could give them away. He had many hunting and fishing stories. He would go fishing at Canyon or Calaveras Lake with his buddy, Jim, even when it was below freezing. He said that was when the "fishing was good". He was even a bee-keeper for a while. Genevieve couldn't hang out the laundry anymore, because the bees chased her. He moved some bees to Cuero, but the honey tasted like sagebrush because it was a dry year.

John was a humble, hard-working, cheerful, giving person. He dearly loved his family and his friends. He would help anyone who needed a hand.

He said in recent months, that he was ready for the Good Lord to take him.

However, he remained good natured and calm even when he couldn't remember everyday occurrences. He could still remember names and events

from his childhood and younger years. He loved to exchange cattle, fishing and hunting stories with his visitors. He truly kept his dignity and remained at home until his prayer was answered. He was loved by many and will be greatly missed. John was truly an inspiration.

May God rest your beautiful soul. We love you Dad, Grandpa, Uncle Johnny and Grandpa John (as his great granddaughter, Genevieve would call him).

Visitation will be held Sunday, January 8, 2023, from 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. with a rosary to be recited at 6:00 P.M. at Mission Park Funeral Chapels South. A Catholic funeral service will be celebrated on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 10:00 A.M. at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church. Interment will follow at Mission Burial Park South.

The family would like for you to consider making a donation to either:

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church – 1314 Fair Ave SAT 78223 or
Seraphic Sister of our Lady of Sorrows at Our Lady of Czestochowa Shrine –
138 Beethoven SAT 78210

Cemetery Details

Mission Burial Park South

1700 SE Military Dr.
San Antonio, TX 78214
<http://www.missionparks.com>

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 8. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels South, Cemeteries & Crematories
1700 SE Military Dr
San Antonio, TX 78214
(210) 924-4242
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Recitation of the Rosary

JAN 8. 6:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels South, Cemeteries & Crematories
1700 SE Military Dr
San Antonio, TX 78214
(210) 924-4242
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Catholic Funeral Service

JAN 9. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
1314 Fair Ave
San Antonio, TX 78223

Interment

JAN 9 (CT)

Mission Burial Park South
1700 SE Military Dr.
San Antonio, TX 78214
<http://www.missionparks.com>

Tribute Wall

BR

“ One June in the 50s Johnny learned I needed a way to get home for the summer from the seminary in Kirkwood, Mo. He saved me the expense of train fare. He picked me up on his way from D.C.. So I got a chance to ride with our family "007 guy" and his mysterious padlocked government satchel of "something secret" attached to his wrist

Thank you for the wonderful life story of just a regular guy. Who knows if it wasn't more than that.

Bert Rakowitz

Bert Rakowitz - January 08, 2023 at 09:11 AM

KD

“ I was grown up with him through my dad Charles Marvin Dechert, I went to there parties at that park where all the k.a.f.b. members I met. I what to thank him and his daughter sent me money and pictures of John mowing and working in his garden. He was my dad's boss, we would talk on the phone before I gave the phone to dad, then him and I kept in touch. I will miss him greatly 😭 , always hunting and making sausage 🥩

Kristie Dechert - January 07, 2023 at 10:49 PM

KD

Money for my dad when he passed 2 yrs ago.

Kristie Dechert - January 07, 2023 at 10:54 PM

DK

“ David and Karen Kelldorf purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John Anthony Bongiovi.



David and Karen Kelldorf - January 04, 2023 at 06:13 PM

DO

“ Uncle Johnny was a radar man, cattleman, world traveler and could cook and can. He will be missed. Love, Donna

donna - January 04, 2023 at 05:39 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of John Anthony Bongiovi.



January 01, 2023 at 04:40 PM